

# FLUORESCENT BULB RECYCLING PROJECT

Belmont residents and small businesses may **drop off** four and eight feet long fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent bulbs at the following locations: **Hillside Gardens**, 280 Blanchard Rd., from 8 am to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday; the **Electric Light Department**, 40 Prince St., 7:30 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday; and at the **Department of Public Works** (DPW) Main Office, Homer Building, 19 Moore St., from 8am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday.

This project is a cooperative effort by Town Departments: Building Services, DPW, Electric Light, Health and Schools, and private parties, Hillside Gardens and the Mercury Recovery Project managed by Pat Scanlon.

Fluorescent bulbs contain mercury in the vapor inside the bulb. It is not harmful unless the bulb is broken, and for that reason the bulbs are now included in the list of "universal wastes," items requiring special handling. Fluorescent bulbs, like televisions and computer monitors, can no longer be put in the regular trash for curb-side pick-up.

The Sustainable Belmont Committee has been very excited about this project. The Committee is encouraging residents to use these fluorescent bulbs because they have a very long life and use less electricity than standard incandescent bulbs. Having a convenient disposal site should add to their attractiveness.

"Although it's essential to dispose of compact florescent light (CFL) bulbs properly, the environmental benefits of CFL bulbs far outweigh the small amount of mercury in the bulb itself because coal power plants that provide electricity are the biggest source of mercury emissions in the United States," says Sustainable Belmont Co-chair Heather Tuttle. "CFLs use only one-quarter to one-third of the energy as incandescent bulbs, and last up to 10 times longer, saving users money over the long term despite the higher purchase price. If you can replace only a few lights at first, choose those that are used most often to reap the greatest benefits."

Through the Mercury Recovery Project the Town will receive 100% reimbursement for the cost of the bulb disposal and hopefully insure that the mercury will not contaminate air, water or soil. The Health Dept. and DPW have been collecting mercury thermometers for many years and will replace them with up to two digital ones. Button cell batteries contain mercury and can be brought to the Health Dept., the DPW office in the Homer Building, Hillside Gardens and the Electric Light Dept. Rechargeable batteries can also be brought for recycling to the Health and Electric Light Depts.

Questions about this project can be addressed to the Health Dept. at 617-993-2720, Monday through Friday.